Riot grrrl

Riot grrrl is an underground feminist punk movement that began in the early 1990s in Washington state[1] (particularly Olympia)[2] and the greater Pacific Northwest. It also had origins in Washington, D.C.,[3] and spread to at least 26 countries.[4] It is a subcultural movement that combines feminist consciousness and punk style and politics.[5] It is often associated with third-wave feminism, which is sometimes seen as having grown out of the Riot Grrrl movement. It has also been described as a musical genre that came out of indie rock, with the punk scene serving as an inspiration for a musical movement in which women could express themselves in the same way men had been doing for the past several years.[6]

Riot grrrl bands often address issues such as rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, racism, patriarchy, classism, anarchism and female empowerment. Primary bands associated with the movement include Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Heavens to Betsy, Excuse 17, Huggy Bear, Skinned Teen, Emily's Sassy Lime and Sleater-Kinney, as well as queercore groups like Team Dresch and The Third Sex.[7][8] In addition to a music scene and genre, riot grrrl is a subculture involving a DIY ethic, zines, art, political action, and activism.[9] The riot grrrl movement quickly spread well beyond its musical roots to create vibrant "zine" and Internet-based movement, complete with local meetings and grassroots organizing to end ageism, homophobia, weightism, racism, sexism and, especially, physical and emotional violence against women and girls.[10] Riot grrrls are known to hold meetings, start chapters,[4] and support and organize women in music.[11]

Riot grrrl	
Stylistic origins	**Musical:** Hardcore punk · punk rock · alternative rock · indie rock **Ideological:** Third-wave feminism · punk
Cultural origins	Early 1990s, Pacific Northwest and Washington, US
Typical instruments	Electric guitar · vocals · bass · drums
(complete list)	
Regional scenes	
Washington	
Local scenes	
Washington, D.C.	
Other topics	
Feminism · foxcore · Guerrilla Girls · identity politics · kinderwhore · punk subculture · queercore	

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Origins

During the late 1970s and early and mid-1980s there were a number of groundbreaking female punk and rock musicians who later influenced the riot grrrl ethos. These included Siouxsie Sioux, Poly Styrene, The Slits, Au Pairs, The Raincoats, Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde, The Runaways/Joan Jett, The B-52's, LiLiPUT, Lydia Lunch, Exene Cervenka, Kim Gordon, Ut, Neo Boys, Bush Tetras, Y Pants, ESG, Chalk Circle, Fifth Column, Frightwig, X-Ray Spex, Scrawl, and Anti-Scrunti Faction.[12] The 1980s also featured a number of female folk singers from New York whose lyrics were realistic and socio-political, but also personally intimate.[12]

During the mid-1980s in Vancouver the influential Mecca Normal fronted by poet Jean Smith formed, followed by Sugar Baby Doll in San Francisco whose members would all wind up in hardcore female bands.[13] In 1987, the magazine *Sassy* premiered and dealt with tough subjects that conventional magazines aimed at teenage girls did not.[13] An article "Women, sex and rock and roll" published by *Puncture, edited by Katherine Spielmann,* in 1989 became the first manifesto of the movement.[13] In 1991, a radio program hosted by Lois Maffeo entitled *Your Dream Girl* aimed at angry young women debuted on Olympia, Washington radio station KAOS.[13]

During the early 1990s the Seattle/Olympia Washington area had a sophisticated do it yourself infrastructure.[12] Young women involved in underground music scenes took advantage of this to articulate their feminist thoughts and desires through creating punk-rock fanzines and forming garage bands. The political model of collage-based, photocopied handbills and booklets was already used by the punk movement as a way to activate underground music, leftist politics and alternative (to mainstream) sub-cultures. There was a discomfort among many women in the punk movement who felt that they had no space for organizing, because of the misogyny in the punk culture. Many women found that while they identified with a larger, music-oriented subculture, they often had little to no voice in their local scenes. Women at the punk-rock shows saw themselves as girlfriends of the boys, so they took it upon themselves to represent their own interests by making their own fanzines, music and art.[14]

In 1991, young women coalesced in an unorganized collective response to several women's issues, such as the Christian Coalition's Right to Life attack on legal abortion and the Senate Judiciary Hearings into Anita Hill's accusations of sexual harassment by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.[15] Young feminist voices were heard through multiple protests, actions, and events such as the formative opening night of the International Pop Underground Convention[16] and later L7's Rock for Choice.

Uses and meanings of the term "riot grrrl" developed slowly over time, but its etymological origins can be traced to the actual Mount Pleasant race riots in spring 1991. Bratmobile member Jen Smith (later of Rastro! and The Quails), used the phrase "girl riot" in a letter to Allison Wolfe.[15][17][18] Soon afterwards, Wolfe and Molly Neuman collaborated with Kathleen Hanna and Tobi Vail to create a new

zine and called it *Riot Grrrl*, combining the "riot" with an oft-used phrase that first appeared in Vail's fanzine *Jigsaw* "Revolution Grrrl Style Now".[19] Riot grrrls took a growling double or triple *r*, placing it in the word *girl*, as a way to take back the derogatory use of the term.[20]

Bikini Kill

Kathleen Hanna had been studying at The Evergreen State College in Olympia. She participated in a small collective art gallery called Reko Muse, which would frequently host bands like The Go Team and Some Velvet Sidewalk to play in between art exhibitions (partially just to keep the gallery running). Hanna started a band, Amy Carter (named after the daughter of the US President Jimmy Carter), with fellow gallery-founders Heidi Arbogast and Tammy Rae Carland. After touring with some other projects like Viva Knievel, she hooked up with The Go Team drummer and zinester Tobi Vail, who had been writing of her own experiences:

> I feel completely left out of the realm of everything that is so important to me. And I know that this is partly because punk rock is for and by boys mostly and partly because punk rock of this generation is coming of age in a time of mindless career-goal bands.

They started working together on another fanzine called *Bikini Kill*, which, after recruiting friends Kathi Wilcox and Billy "Boredom" Karren, would eventually become a band.[19][21]

Bratmobile

Allison Wolfe met Molly Neuman at the University of Oregon. Wolfe introduced Neuman to bands such as Beat Happening and The Melvins, Neuman introduced Wolfe to sociology classes and Public Enemy.

Allison Wolfe, Anna Oxygen and Jen Smith at a 2011 conference

They began working on zines called *Girl Germs*, and later *riot grrrl* with Tobi Vail, Kathleen Hanna and Jen Smith.

> It was a really hippie town, and we were getting really politicized, but also really into this DIY thing, so we kinda started creating. 'Let's make our own fanzine!'[22]

Wolfe and Neuman started frequenting shows by bands like Fugazi and Nirvana. In 1990, Calvin Johnson called them up and asked them to play a show on Valentine's Day with Some Velvet Sidewalk and the newly formed Bikini Kill. They accepted it as a dare and played the show at Olympia's North Shore Surf club. Guitarist Erin Smith joined in March 1991.

International Pop Underground Convention

From August 20 – 25, 1991, K Records held an indie music festival called the International Pop Underground Convention. A promotional poster reads:

>

> As the corporate ogre expands its creeping influence on the minds of industrialized youth, the time has come for the International Rockers of the World to convene in celebration of our grand independence. Hangman hipsters, new mod rockers, sidestreet walkers, scooter-mounted dream girls, punks, teds, the instigators of the Love Rock Explosion, the editors of every angry grrrl zine, the plotters of youth rebellion in every form, the midwestern librarians and Scottish ski instructors who live by night, all are setting aside August 20–25, 1991 as the time.[23]

An all-female bill on the first night, called "Love Rock Revolution Girl Style Now!" signalled a major step in the movement.[24][25] The lineup featured Bratmobile, Heavens to Betsy, Nikki McClure, Lois Maffeo, Jean Smith of Mecca Normal, 7 Year Bitch, and two side projects of Kathleen Hanna: the first was Suture with Sharon Cheslow of Chalk Circle (DC's first all-women punk band) and Dug E. Bird of Beefeater, the second was the Wondertwins with Tim Green of Nation of Ulysses. It was here that so many zinester people who'd only known each other from networking, mail, or talking on the phone, finally met and were brought together by an entire night of music dedicated to, for, and by women.

The convention featured other bands such as Unwound, L7, The Fastbacks, The Spinanes, Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, Girl Trouble, The Pastels, Kicking Giant, Rose Melberg, Seaweed, Kreviss, I Scream Truck, Scrawl, Nation of Ulysses, Jad Fair, Thee Headcoats, and Steve Fisk, and spoken-word artist Juliana Luecking. This convention demonstrated a new relationship between audience and performers, dismantling the power dynamic of the past, for instance voicing anger at people harassing the female performers.[26]

Decline and later developments

By the mid-nineties, riot grrrl had severely splintered. Many within the movement felt that the mainstream media had completely misrepresented their message, and that the politically radical aspects of riot grrrl had been subverted by the likes of the Spice Girls and their "girl power" message, or co-opted by ostensibly women-centered bands (though sometimes with only one female performer per band) and festivals like Lilith Fair. Later waves of riot grrrl chapters opened in Latin America, North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia through to the 2010s.

Of the original riot grrrl bands, Bratmobile, Heavens to Betsy and Huggy Bear had split in 1994, Excuse 17 and most of the UK bands had split by 1995, and Bikini Kill and Emily's Sassy Lime released their last records in 1996. However, Team Dresch were active as late as 1998, The Gossip were active from 1999, Bratmobile reformed in 2000 and, perhaps most prolific of all, Sleater-Kinney were active - initially - from 1994 to 2006, releasing 7 albums.

Many of the women involved in riot grrrl are still active in creating politically charged music. Kathleen Hanna went on to found the electro-feminist post-punk "protest pop" group Le Tigre and later The Julie Ruin, Kathi Wilcox joined The Casual Dots with Christina Billotte of Slant 6, and Tobi Vail formed Spider and the Webs. Corin Tucker of Heavens to Betsy and Carrie Brownstein of Excuse 17 co-founded Sleater-Kinney at the tail end of the original movement, and reformed the band again in 2014 after an 8-year hiatus, while Bratmobile reunited to release two albums, before Allison Wolfe began singing with other all-women bands, Cold Cold Hearts, and Partyline. Molly Neuman went on to play with New York punk band Love Or Perish and run her own indie label called Simple Social Graces Discos, as well as co-owning Lookout! Records and managing The Donnas, Ted Leo, Some Girls, and The Locust. Kaia

Wilson of Team Dresch and multimedia artist Tammy Rae Carland went on to form the now-defunct Mr. Lady Records which released albums by The Butchies, The Need, Kiki and Herb, and Tracy + the Plastics.

Feminism and riot grrrl culture

Riot grrrl culture is often associated with third wave feminism, which also grew rapidly during the same early nineties timeframe. The movement of third-wave feminism focused less on laws and the political process and more on individual identity. The movement of third-wave feminism is said to have arisen out of the realization that women are of many colors, ethnicities, nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds.[27] The riot grrrl movement allowed women their own space to create music and make political statements about the issues they were facing in the punk rock community and in society. They used their music and publications to express their views on issues such as patriarchy, double standards against women, rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, and female empowerment.[28]

An undated, typewritten Bikini Kill tour flier answers the question "What is Riot grrrl?" with:

> "[Riot Grrrl is ...] Because we girls want to create mediums that speak to US. We are tired of boy band after boy band, boy zine after boy zine, boy punk after boy punk after boy... Because we need to talk to each other. Communication and inclusion are key. We will never know if we don't break the code of silence... Because in every form of media we see ourselves slapped, decapitated, laughed at, objectified, raped, trivialized, pushed, ignored, stereotyped, kicked, scorned, molested, silenced, invalidated, knifed, shot, choked and killed. Because a safe space needs to be created for girls where we can open our eyes and reach out to each other without being threatened by this sexist society and our day to day bullshit."[29]

Like other third wave feminists, riot grrrls attempted to foster an acceptance of diversity within feminist expression. That relationship to feminism is evident through their use of lyrics, zines and publications, and taking back the meaning of derogatory terms. All three of these forms were claimed to be a source of empowerment for women in the movement.

The riot grrrl movement encouraged women to develop their own place in a male-dominated punk scene. Punk shows had come to be understood as places where "women could make their way to the front of the crowd into the mosh pit, but had to 'fight ten times harder' because they were female, and sexually charged violence such as groping and rape had been reported."[30]

In contrast, riot grrrl bands would often actively invite members of the audience to talk about their personal experiences with sensitive issues such as sexual abuse, pass out lyric sheets to everyone in the audience, and often demand that the mosh boys move to the back or side to allow space in front for the girls in the audience.[19] The bands weren't always enthusiastically received at shows by male audience members. *Punk Planet* editor Daniel Sinker wrote in *We Owe You Nothing*:

> The vehemence fanzines large and small reserved for riot grrrl – and Bikini Kill in particular – was shocking. The punk zine editors' use of 'bitches', 'cunts', 'man-haters', and 'dykes' was proof-positive that sexism was still strong in the punk scene.

Kathi Wilcox said in a fanzine interview:

> I've been in a state of surprise for several years about this very thing. I don't know why so-called punk rockers are so threatened by a little shake-up of the truly boring dynamic of the standard show atmosphere. How fresh is the idea of fifty sweaty hardcore boys slamming into each other or jumping on each others' heads? Granted, it's kind of cool to be on stage and have action in the front, much more inspiring than to look out at a crowd of zombies, but so often the survival-of-the-fittest principle is in operation in the pit, and what girl wants to go up against a pack of Rollins boys who usually only want to be extra mean to her anyway just to make her "prove" her place in the pit. This was the case when I was first going to shows, and it's sad that things haven't changed at all since. ... But it would have been so cool if at one of these shows someone onstage would have said, hey let's have more girls up in the front, just so I could have had more company and girls over to side could have seen better/been in the action. So yeah, we do encourage girls to the front, and sometimes when shows have gotten really violent (like when we were in England) we had to ask the boys to move to the side or the back because it was just too fucking scary for us, after several attacks and threats, to face another sea of hostile boy-faces right in the front.[31]

Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill in 1996

Kathleen Hanna would later write: "It was also super schizo to play shows where guys threw stuff at us, called us cunts and yelled "take it off" during our set, and then the next night perform for throngs of amazing girls singing along to every lyric and cheering after every song."[32]

Many men were supporters of riot grrrl culture and acts. Calvin Johnson and Slim Moon have been instrumental in publishing riot grrrl bands on the labels they founded, K Records and Kill Rock Stars respectively. Alec Empire of Atari Teenage Riot said, "I was totally into the riot grrrl music, I see it as a very important form of expression. I learned a lot from that, way more maybe than from 'male' punk rock."[33] Dave Grohl and Kurt Cobain dated Kathleen Hanna and Tobi Vail (also respectively), and often played with Bikini Kill even after splitting with them; Kurt was a big fan of The Slits and even convinced The Raincoats to reform. He once said, "The future of rock belongs to women."[34] Many riot grrrl bands included male band members, such as Billy Karren of Bikini Kill or Jon Slade and Chris Rawley of Huggy Bear.

Molly Neuman once summarized: "We're not anti-boy, we're pro-girl."[33] Riot grrrl concerts provided a safe haven for women, and often addressed issues such as rape, domestic abuse, sexuality and female empowerment. For example, in Bikini Kill's "Don't Need You", they sing: "don't need you to say we're cute/don't need you to say we're alright/don't need your protection/don't need your kiss goodnight", rejecting stereotypical heterosexual relationship dynamics.[35]

Influenced heavily by DIY culture, most bands' presentation subverted traditional or classically trained 'musicianship' in favor of raw, primitive, avant-lo-fi passion and fiercely deliberate amateurism: an idea growing rapidly in popularity, especially in the Olympia music scene, with bands like Beat Happening

coining the slogans: "Learn how to NOT play your instrument" and "hey, you don't have to sound like the flavor of the month, all you have to do is sound like yourselves", arguing that traditional musical skill doesn't ultimately matter and should always be subservient to the passion, the fun and ideas in their music. This argument is similar to the ideological origins of punk rock itself, which started partially as an attempt to dissolve the growing division between audience and performer. These indie-punk bands (and riot grrrl bands in particular) were often ridiculed for "not being able to play their instruments", but fans are quick to counter that identical criticisms were often faced by the first-wave of punk rock bands in the 1970s, and that this DIY garage amateurism "play just 'cause you wanna, no matter what" attitude was one of the most appealing and liberating aspects of both movements.

Music

Other bands and artists associated with the riot grrrl movement in one way or another include - in the US - Slant 6, Sta-Prest, Jenny Toomey, Adickdid, Tattle Tale, Jack Off Jill, The Need, Nomy Lamm, Lucid Nation, The Frumpies, Bangs, The Third Sex and The Quails; and in the UK, bands like Blood Sausage, Mambo Taxi, Voodoo Queens, Pussycat Trash, Frantic Spiders, Linus, Sister George and Lungleg.

There were also many girl-centric or all-women punk and queercore bands of this era, such as Calamity Jane, 7 Year Bitch, Red Aunts, Autoclave, Thee Headcoatees, Spitboy, Scissor Girls, and Tribe 8, who did not self-identify with the 'riot grrrl' label, despite sharing similar DIY tactics and feminist ideologies.

Media misconceptions

As media attention increasingly focused on Grunge and Alternative Rock in the early nineties, the term "Riot Grrrl" was often applied to less political female or female-fronted alternative rock acts such as Babes in Toyland, The Breeders, The Gits, 7 Year Bitch, Hole, Lunachicks, Dickless, L7, PJ Harvey, Liz Phair, Veruca Salt, and even No Doubt, although the term could arguably apply to L7 due to their involvement in the creation of Rock for Choice, a series of concerts and compilation albums designed to raise money and awareness for abortion rights and protection of women's health clinics.[36] To their chagrin, riot grrrls found themselves in the media spotlight during 1992, accused of dragging feminism into the mosh pit in magazines from *Seventeen* to *Newsweek*.[37][38] Fallout from the media coverage led to resignations from the movement of people like Jessica Hopper, who was at the center of the *Newsweek* article. Kathleen Hanna called that year for "a press block". In an essay from January 1994, included in the CD version of Bikini Kill's first two records, Tobi Vail responded to media simplifications and mis-characterization of Riot Grrrl:

> one huge misconception for instance that has been repeated over and over again in magazines we have never spoken to and also by those who believe these sources without checking things out themselves is that Bikini Kill is the definitive 'riot girl band' ... We are not in anyway 'leaders of' or authorities on the 'Riot Girl' movement. In fact, as individuals we have each had different experiences with, feelings on, opinions of and varying degrees of involvement with 'Riot Girl' and though we totally respect those who still feel that label is important and meaningful to them, we have never used that term to describe ourselves AS A BAND. As individuals we respect and utilize and subscribe to a variety of different aesthetics, strategies, and beliefs, both political and punk-wise, some of which are probably considered 'riot girl.'

Writer/musician/historian/artist Sharon Cheslow said in EMP's *Riot Grrrl Retrospective* documentary:

> There were a lot of very important ideas that I think the mainstream media couldn't handle, so it was easier to focus on the fact that these were girls who were wearing barrettes in their hair or writing 'slut' on their stomach.

Corin Tucker of Heavens to Betsy and Sleater-Kinney said:

> I think it was deliberate that we were made to look like we were just ridiculous girls parading around in our underwear. They refused to do serious interviews with us, they misprinted what we had to say, they would take our articles, and our fanzines, and our essays and take them out of context. We wrote a lot about sexual abuse and sexual assault for teenagers and young women. I think those are really important concepts that the media *never* addressed.[39]

Zines and publications

Even as the Seattle-area rock scene came to international mainstream media attention, riot grrrl remained a willfully underground phenomenon.[29] Most musicians shunned the major record labels, devotedly working instead with indie labels such as Kill Rock Stars, K Records, Slampt, Piao! Records, Simple Machines, Catcall, WIIIJA and Chainsaw Records. The movement also figured fairly prominently in cassette culture, with artists often starting their own DIY cassette labels by as basic and spartan a means as recording their music onto cheap off-the-shelf boom-boxes and passing the cassettes out to friends, seldom charging anything beyond the cost of the actual tapes themselves.

Riot grrrl's momentum was also hugely supported by an explosion of creativity in defiantly homemade cut and paste, xeroxed, collagey zines that covered a variety of feminist topics, frequently attempting to draw out the political implications of intensely personal experiences in a "privately public" space.[29] Zines often described experiences with sexism, mental illness, body image and eating disorders, sexual abuse, racism, rape, discrimination, stalking, domestic violence, incest, homophobia, and sometimes vegetarianism. Grrrl zine editors are collectively engaged in forms of writing and writing instruction that challenge both dominant notions of the author as an individualized, bodiless space and notions of feminism as primarily an adult political project.[40]

These zines were archived by zinewiki.com, and Riot Grrrl Press, started in Washington DC in 1992 by Erika Reinstein & May Summer. Others can be found anthologized in *A Girl's Guide to Taking over the World: Writings from the Girl Zine Revolution*, for which actress/singer/musician/writer/performance artist Ann Magnuson of Bongwater fame wrote as a foreword:

> When I think of how much benefit my teenage self could have gained from the multitude of zines that have proliferated over the past decade, I weep for all the lost potential. Except for Joan of Arc and Anne Frank, the thoughts of teenage girls have rarely been taken seriously.

Bands would often attempt to reappropriate derogatory phrases like "cunt", "bitch", "dyke", and "slut", writing them proudly on their skin with lipstick or fat markers. Kathleen Hanna was writing "slut" on her stomach at shows as early as 1992, intentionally fusing feminist art and activist practices.[15] Riot grrrls

making political statements to reclaim phrases is a common theme among third-wave feminists. Not only did their music address the same issues as third-wave feminism, but they took a political stance against the oppression they were feeling.

Many of the women involved with queercore were also interested in riot grrrl, and zines such as *Chainsaw* by Donna Dresch, *Sister Nobody*, *Jane Gets A Divorce* and *I (heart) Amy Carter* by Tammy Rae Carland embody both movements. There were also national conventions like in Washington, D.C., or the Pussystock festival in New York City, as well as various subsequent indie-documentaries like *Don't Need You: the Herstory of Riot Grrrl*.

Starting during the fall of 2010, the "Riot Grrrl Collection" has been housed at New York University's Fales Library and Special Collections, as "The Fales Riot Grrrl Collection". The collection's primary mandate is "to collect unique materials that provide documentation of the creative process of individuals and the chronology of the [Riot Grrrl] movement overall".[41] Kathleen Hanna, Johanna Fateman, and Becca Albee have donated primary source material, while Molly Neuman, Allison Wolfe, Kathi Wilcox, and Carrie Brownstein are expected to donate material shortly. The collection is the brainchild of Lisa Darms, Senior Archivist at the Fales Library. According to Jenna Freedman, a librarian who maintains a zine collection at Barnard College, "It's just essential to preserve the activist voices in their own unmediated work, especially because of the media blackout that they called for". Kathleen Hanna, while understanding no collection can replicate the concert experience, feels the collection is a safe place that will be "free from feminist erasure".[41][42]

Criticism

The "Riot Grrrl" movement has received criticism for not being inclusive enough. Riot Girls are often accused of being separatists: they want to form a life away from men and invent "girl culture".[43] One major argument is that the movement focuses on middle-class white women, alienating other kinds of women.[44][45] This criticism emerged early in the movement. In 1993, Ramdasha Bikceem wrote in her zine, *Gunk*,

> Riot grrrl calls for change, but I question who it's including ... I see Riot Grrrl growing very closed to a very few i.e. white middle class punk girls.[29]

Musician Courtney Love has criticized the movement for being too doctrinaire and censorious:

> Look, you've got these highly intelligent imperious girls, but who told them it was their undeniable American right not to be offended? Being offended is part of being in the real world. I'm offended every time I see George Bush on TV![46]

Some have suggested that, while riot grrrl bands worked to ensure their shows were safe spaces in which women could find solidarity and create their own subculture, they have excluded trans women from events such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which has a womyn-born womyn policy. Former members of Le Tigre have seen protests at shows for participating in the festival.[47]

Legacy

The legacy of riot grrrl is clearly visible in numerous girls and women worldwide who cite the movement as an interest or an influence on their lives and/or their work.[49][50] Some of them are self-proclaimed riot grrrls while others consider themselves simply admirers or fans. There are many fansites and message boards for riot grrrl on the internet.[51] In an age where Internet is the most accessible platform for individuals to express themselves, the Riot Grrrl online community has risen in popularity in recent years. Not only do these online platforms capture discussion regarding larger topics of systemic oppression, but they also provide space for girls to express smaller issues—the successes and challenges of their everyday lives. It is a forum that allows for self-determined feminism and genuine, open expression, a core part of the Riot Grrrl message that's greatest power is giving girls the room to decide for themselves who they are.[52] As both a purported musical genre and as a subculture, riot grrrl has been acclaimed as an influence on contemporary groups as varied as Kitten Forever, Skating Polly, The Shondes and The Ethical Debating Society. Besides that, the Riot Grrrl movement has been a strong influence not only for the punk-rock scene but also for other kinds of music.

Carrie Brownstein of Excuse 17 and Sleater-Kinney in 2005

In the foreword to *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now!* Beth Ditto writes of riot grrrl,

> A movement formed by a handful of girls who felt empowered, who were angry, hilarious, and extreme through and for each other. Built on the floors of strangers' living rooms, tops of Xerox machines, snail mail, word of mouth and mixtapes, riot grrrl reinvented punk.[53]

The Regrettes formed in 2015 and merge riot grrrl with elements of doo-wop[48]

Writing about riot grrrl's personal influence on her and her music, she muses on the meaning of the movement for her generation,

> Until I found riot grrrl, or riot grrrl found me I was just another Gloria Steinem NOW feminist trying to take a stand in shop class. Now I am a musician, a writer, a whole person.[53]

Many women write to Hanna in hopes of reviving the Riot Grrrl Movement. Hanna says, "Don't revive it, make something better".[54] In 2010 *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution*, by Sara Marcus, was published. It is the first published history of the Riot Grrrl movement.[55][56] Sara Marcus herself had attended Riot Grrrl meetings.[57] As of now there are approximately ten weekly Riot Girl meetings nationwide, and bands multiplying faster than can be counted.[43][58]

In 2013 Astria Suparak and Ceci Moss curated *Alien She*, an exhibition examining the impact of Riot Grrrl on artists and cultural producers. Alien She focuses on seven people whose visual art practices were informed by their contact with Riot Grrrl. Many of them work in multiple disciplines, such as sculpture, installation, video, documentary film, photography, drawing, printmaking, new media, social practice, curation, music, writing and performance—a reflection of the movement's artistic diversity and mutability.[59][60][61] It opened September 2013 at the Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and ran through February the following year. It visited four subsequent art spaces (Vox Populi in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March – April 2014; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, October 2014 – January 2015; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California, February – May 2015; and Pacific Northwest College of Art: 511 Gallery and the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland, Oregon, September 3, 2015 – January 9, 2016[62]).

The term "grrrl" (or "grrl") itself has since been co-opted or used by agencies as diverse as advocacy on behalf of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (GRRL POWER 1.0 5-PACK / Memetics for the Ladies)[63] and a roller derby league in Singapore.[64]

In January 2019, Bikini Kill announced their reunion tour for the first time in 22 years since their last show in Tokyo in 1997. The Guardian states in an article on Bikini Kill's reunion, that the once-underground Riot Grrrl movement has gone mainstream because of the celebrities speaking out about the topic and the increased attention to other feminism movements such as the Me Too movement. In the article, Bikini Kill's original drummer Tobi Vail says that she is frustrated that women are still fighting for what riot grrrls wanted in the 1990s.[65]

> These same issues still exist, being a woman in public is very intense, whether it’s in the public eye or just walking down the street at night by yourself.[65]

Vail also explains the aims of their reunion, that women find the band and understand their history, especially those who did not hear them the first time around.

> We’re doing it because we want to be a part of this conversation about what feminism is in this moment.[65]

Since beginning in the 1990s, the Riot Grrrl movement spread across the world with Riot Grrrl bands being established in Brazil, Paraguay, Israel, Australia, Malaysia, and across Europe.[66] The globalization of the Riot Grrrl movement was aided by the distribution of zines across Asia, Europe, and South America.[67] With the Spread of the Riot Grrrl movement, women gained access to an outlet to challenge the dominant culture around female bodies through a form of self-expression[66] that previously was often inaccessible to women.[67] In addition to becoming a vehicle of expression for equality, Riot Grrrl bands affected the status quo in the music industry by challenging the gender balance that favoured male musicians.[68] One of the most well known bands to come out of the globalization of the Riot Grrrl movement is Pussy Riot. Pussy Riot is a Russian band who self-identify as twenty-first century Russian Riot Grrrls.[67] They embrace the ideals of Riot Grrrls by challenging the political climate they personally experience as well as the homophobic and patriarchal elements of everyday Russian life.[67]

See also

- All-female band
- Anarcha-feminism
- *C86*
- Feminism
- Foxcore
- Girl power
- Guerrilla Girls
- Kinderwhore
- List of all-women bands
- List of riot grrrl bands
- Punk ideology
- Queercore
- Rock Against Sexism
- *Tank Girl*
- Women in music

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External links

- She Came to Riot (http://jacobinmag.com/2013/09/she-came-to-riot/)
- Riot grrrl collections at the Fales Special Collections at NYU (http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/fales/findingaidsrg.html)
- Bikini Kill archive (http://bikinikillarchive.wordpress.com/)
- Kathleen Hanna blog (http://kathleenhanna.wordpress.com/)
- Tobi Vail blog (http://jigsawunderground.blogspot.com/)
- Layla Gibbon blog (http://whatwewantisfree.blogspot.com/)
- Layla Gibbon 2-part interview (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyoZKvRzWQs)
- The Riot Grrrl Manifesto (http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/riotgrrrlmanifesto.html)
- The Riot Grrrl Portrait Collection (http://www.myspace.com/portraitcollection/)
- Riot Grrrl UK site (http://www.freewebs.com/riotgrrrluk/index.htm/)
- Andy from Linus's 1993 diary (http://www.linusland.co.uk/Andy93.html)—a glimpse into the UK riot grrrl scene at that time
- Cranked Up Really High. Chapter IX: Suck My Left One (http://www.stewarthomesociety.org/cranked/leftone.htm), by Stewart Home
- ZineWiki (http://zinewiki.com)
- grrrl zine archive (http://grrrlzines.net/zines/N.htm)
- Grrrl Sounds (http://www.grrrlsounds.com)
- List of Riot Grrrl Chapters Internationally (https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=18LUKCYu_lMY4LW3nCsKfTmau7-w)

- Riot Grrrl Census (https://riotgrrrlcensus.tumblr.com/)
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- 2009 Guardian article on riot grrrl legacy (https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2009/mar/04/grrrl-power-music)
- 2009 Guardian article (https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2009/sep/14/myths-riot-grrrl-cribs-takeover), by Everett True
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- Sara Marcus interview (http://thenewgay.net/2010/11/sara-marcus-author-of-girls-to-the-front.html)
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